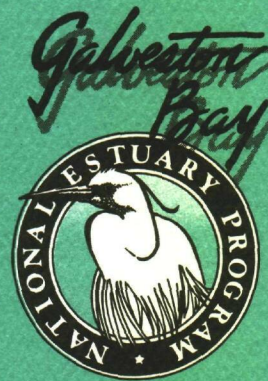


Trawling Bycatch in the Galveston Bay System

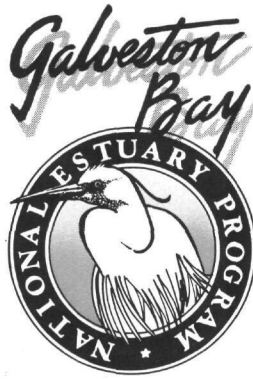


Galveston Bay
National Estuary Program

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Trawling Bycatch in the Galveston Bay System

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The Galveston Bay National Estuary Program

Texans increasingly express their expectations for a clean environment in terms of entire ecosystems. Until recently, our tendency was to view environmental problems in isolated pieces we could understand—indeed this view was institutionalized (and seemingly immortalized) in an elaborate mosaic of fragmented jurisdictions. The Galveston Bay National Estuary Program (GBNEP) is a forerunner in elevating hands-on management of coastal environments to the level of the ecosystem; and in doing so, is encouraging an integration of traditionally disparate institutions.

The GBNEP was established under the authority of the Water Quality Act of 1987 to develop a *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) for Galveston Bay. The purpose of the CCMP is to address threats to the Bay resulting from pollution, development, and overuse. To address these threats, five years of work commenced in 1990, consisting of three phases: (1) Identification of the specific problems facing the Bay; (2) A Bay-wide effort to compile data and information to describe status, trends, and probable causes related to the identified problems; and (3) Creation of the CCMP itself to enhance governance of the Bay at the ecosystem level. The GBNEP is accomplishing this work through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. EPA (Region 6) and the State of Texas (administered by the Texas Water Commission).

The structure of the GBNEP reflects a strong commitment to consensus-building among all Galveston Bay user groups, government agencies, and the public. The GBNEP "Management Conference" consists of six Governor-appointed committees with broad representation, totaling about one hundred individuals. Meetings of these committees are also open to the public, and public participation in policy-setting and in Bay management are considered strengths of the program. When submitted to the Governor of Texas in late 1994, the CCMP will reflect thousands of hours of involvement (much in the form of volunteer time) by individuals who in various ways use, enjoy, or help govern this vital coastal resource.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	List of Figures	xi
	List of Tables	xiv
I.	Executive Summary	1
II.	Introduction	5
III.	Review of Historical Bycatch Studies in Galveston Bay	7
	Methods	7
	Bessette Study	7
	Lamkin Study	8
	Matlock Study	8
	Results and Discussion	8
	Bessette Study	8
	Hydrology	8
	Bycatch	9
	West Bay	11
	Lamkin Study	11
	Matlock Study	13
	Summary	13
	Figures	14
	Tables	31
IV.	Characterization of Trawl Bycatch During 1992	47
	Methods	47
	Sampling Design	47
	Sampling Methodology	48
	Data Analysis	49
	Results and Discussion	50
	Figures	53
	Tables	69
V.	Comparison With TPWD Fishery Independent Surveys	127
	Methods	127
	Results and Discussion	128
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	128
	Student T-Test	129
	Linear Regression	129
	Figures	131
	Tables	132
VI.	Discussion and Conclusions	147
	Historical Investigations	147
	1992 Sampling	148

	Comparison With TPWD Fishery Independent Survey	150
	General Discussion and Conclusions	151
VII.	Comments of the Industry Advisory Panel	159
	Selection of Industry Advisory Panel	159
	Comments of Industry Advisory Panel	159
VIII.	Acknowledgments	161
IX.	References	163
	Appendix 1: Common and Scientific Names of Organisms	169
	Appendix 2: Overview of Texas Shrimp Fishery Regulations	173
	Appendix 3: Sample Data Sheets and Instructions For Observers	175